

Commentary...

A Smart Investment

By Supporters of the Alden Library Project

Today, one sector, above all, attracts the attention of smart investors: information. And it's not surprising. The amount of information available to us is doubling every 5 years. In this exploding age of information, these investors realize that while knowledge once was power, it now will be supreme. It is the key to our future. This means the role that the Duxbury Free Library plays in our lives will be increasingly important.

The plan to convert the Alden School into a modern library for the Town of Duxbury is an important and necessary investment in our community and our children's future. One that will pay big dividends. It will give Duxbury a cultural and educational center that is well-equipped to serve the needs of the townspeople into the 21st century.

Imagine, if you will, a modern library housed in the wonderful 1927 Alden School building. It would be located close to most of our schools. It would be spacious and bright with ample shelving, comfortable reading areas and meeting rooms. It would be a place for our children to first explore the wonders of the world, an oasis for the curious and a gathering place for citizens of all ages. A place where everyone would have access to new technologies including computers, on-line services and more. And, even more important, the physically impaired will enjoy access that is not available to them in our present library.

It's Long Overdue

While it has served us well since 1889, the Duxbury library was last updated in 1968. It is severely overburdened. Designed to serve 5,000, it now serves a community of 14,000. By 2020 it will have to serve a community of 20,000. It lacks space for both people and books. Shelves, designed for 60,000 volumes, now hold 80,000. And there are only 15 seats in the junior library,

for example. The physical plant suffers from inadequate heating, overdue repairs, lack of expansion room and is woefully unprepared for the coming technologies. Its 5 levels are a nightmare for the physically disabled, lacking an elevator or special work stations. In short, a new library is long overdue.

Fortunately, the answer awaits us at the Alden School. The cost of the project is estimated to be \$6.3 million. It is hoped that public grants and private donations will reduce the cost to the town of Duxbury by half.

In 1994 the Alden Library Project won \$200,000 in federal library construction funding awarded by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

In 1995, Duxbury will be eligible for a \$2 million state grant, to be awarded by the very same agency.

The Alden Library Project is a smart investment that will serve as the cultural center to Duxbury for the next century. It's long overdue.

What Will the New Library Have that We Don't Have Now?

- A children's room 4 times the size of the present one.
- Computers for public use.
- Study carrels and a quiet study room.
- Increased on-line capabilities with an emphasis on business information.
- An expanded audio visual and CD collection.
- Spacious meeting rooms with kitchen facilities for lectures and civic meetings.
- Quiet, attractive reading rooms.
- Ample room for the library's collection of books, periodicals, CD ROMs and other material with space to expand.
- Handicapped access.
- More parking and many other features.



Children's room at the present library building on St. George St.